

back to the United States and we can consume it. We need this energy supply. If we just go out there and starve the goose that lays the golden oil, or golden barrel of crude oil, eventually we will find the prices of crude going up higher and higher and higher because there will be less supply.

So we have done some things in this country that were not very smart, and it has been because our hands have been tied here and over in the Senate by environmentalists. It isn't so much that they are concerned something is going to happen to the environment. I have a difficult time looking around the oil fields and finding damage to the environment. It is more, I think, just a belief system, almost a religion, if you will, Mr. Speaker, that if you label it green, more than half the Members of this Congress will vote against oil exploration or oil development or energy development. If you label it something green is against, I should say. If you label it renewable, then they are for it, whether it is practical or whether it isn't.

We need to do a lot of things in this country; and when I look around at the oil exploration in America, it has diminished dramatically. The offshore drilling in America is almost shut down entirely, and that is for both oil and natural gas.

Now, we have developed our natural gas fields in the Gulf Coast, around New Orleans and the coast of Texas. But when you go east and start along the Mississippi and Florida and Alabama, I need to get those people in there, you find that the panhandle of Florida runs along the Gulf Coast quite a ways. But to drill for even natural gas offshore in Florida, even 199.9 miles out offshore has been blocked and banned by a coalition of Democrats and Republicans from Florida, a coalition of Democrats from America, and some people that have jumped on board there that are northeastern Republicans that don't seem to understand that their homes need to be heated, their cars need gas in them, and their factories need natural gas.

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If they are going to produce anything from a factory standpoint, they need natural gas to fire that. And the food that they eat is all grown with nitrogen, Mr. Speaker, and our nitrogen fertilizer that is the backbone of our corn-producing industry in America, 90 percent of the cost of our nitrogen fertilizer is the cost of the natural gas that it takes as a feedstock to produce the natural gas.

So as we shut down our exploration and drilling here in the United States under the misguided notion that somehow we are protecting an environment, an environment that, let me say, Mr. Speaker, in the history of the world, of all of the offshore wells that have been drilled or the onshore wells that have been drilled for natural gas, I cannot find a single incident where there has

been a pollution caused by that gas that came from the drilling. Not offshore or onshore.

We saw natural gas escaping down off the gulf coast of New Orleans. As it bubbled out of the water, only two things can happen. One is it evaporates into the air and dissipates. And the other is if you strike a match to it, you will burn that gas off. But, Mr. Speaker, that is not a pollution to our environment.

Yet the environmentalists want to block all of the drilling that we can possibly provide here in the United States. They want to block it on land and on sea. And if we could find some natural gas in the air, they would try to block that, too.

There is enough natural gas beneath the nonnational park public lands in America to heat every home in this country for the next 150 years, and yet there is an environmentalist barrier into tapping into that natural gas. There are 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas up on the North Slope of Alaska, in the oil fields that we have already developed, those oil fields that feed the Alaska pipeline. That is 38 trillion cubic feet already developed oil there. We need to build a pipeline to run that down to the lower 48 States, and there is more undiscovered gas up there without a doubt, and it is right next door to ANWR.

But I mentioned a little earlier the delegation from Florida, and with a coalition of Democrats and Northeastern Republicans, they have blocked all drilling offshore for natural gas and oil. But the Outer Continental Shelf, that area from the shoreline to 200 miles out, which is where we make claim to the mineral rights, out to 200 miles, the people who are the tourist trade in Florida are afraid that if someone goes out there to drill a well way beyond the line of sight of anyone sitting on a beach in Florida, the mere mention of that will, even though it is beyond the line of sight of people sitting on a beach in Florida, will keep people from going on vacation in Florida.

You know, they have to burn something in their homes to heat them. They have to do something to generate electricity in Florida. I am told, and I have not verified this to my satisfaction or I would tell you that I know it to be factually correct, but conceptually I believe it is, that there are 33 electric generating plants planned for the State of Florida for this year, and that 28 of them are natural-gas-fired; natural-gas-fired electrical generating plants sitting in a State that is surrounded by natural gas on the Outer Continental Shelf, but we cannot tap into that gas, Mr. Speaker, because someone might find out that we drilled a well offshore out of sight of the beaches and not go to Florida to sit on the beach. That is the rationale that is going on.

There is no threat to the environment, none whatsoever. Historically there has been no damage at all.

Mr. Speaker, 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas on the North Slope of Alaska and 406 trillion cubic feet of natural gas on the Outer Continental Shelf of the United States. That is 406 trillion cubic feet, and a lot has still not been properly inventoried.

So we have this massive supply of natural gas. We have seen our natural gas prices go up as many as five times the retail price. I will say it has gone up five to six times in the last 5 to 6 years is the best way to describe that.

So we are all paying the price of high natural gas. We are paying a price for higher fertilizer in the Corn Belt. It is costing us more to heat our homes, and it is costing us a lot more to produce our plastics, which require natural gas in their production. The list of the burden on the economy goes on and on.

Every component of this economy, everything that we sell and buy in America, all has an energy component. It takes energy to produce everything that we do, and it takes energy also to deliver it; that is, the transportation component. So if you are going to produce a widget, it is going to take energy to produce the widget, and then you have to ship it to a warehouse and to a retail outlet. You have to send a salesperson, and that takes energy. If you just do this by telephone and over the Internet, assuming you can compete that way, that takes energy as well.

Here sits the United States of America, the number one consumer of energy and the number one producer by almost every broad measure that there is, and we have not provided to produce an adequate amount of energy in the United States of America when we are sitting right on top of it.

Listening to me talk, Mr. Speaker, one would think that I am for drilling in ANWR, drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf; and, Mr. Speaker, I am. I will go back to ANWR in a little bit, but I want to add that I am for another concept here entirely, and that is we need to grow the size of the energy pie.

But on the ANWR issue with the crude oil aspect of this, the environmentalists will say, no, there is not enough oil there to bother to poke a hole, so we are just going to block it here on this floor.

I remember we had a vote here on the floor on an energy bill a couple of years ago. The vote was on whether we would allow drilling in ANWR. The language read that they would disturb no more than 2,000 acres of ANWR. I read that language, and I think about 2,000 acres conceptually. I am from farm country, and I look at a square section of ground or a 40 or an 80, whatever it is, and I think in those terms.

In my mind's eye when I think 2,000 acres, I think three sections, a little more. But with only 2 minutes left on the vote, I had Members come to me and say, This is drilling in ANWR, and it is limited to 2,000 acres. You are from Iowa; how much is 2,000 acres? Excuse me. How much is an acre? That